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Newly Released FBI Papers Say '67 Detroit Riot Planned

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Leaders of Detroit's 1967 riot planned the destruction in advance and stockpiled guns and firebomb ingredients, according to accounts contained in FBI files made public yesterday.

Officials believed the 6 days of burning, looting and shooting in July 1967 was touched off by a police raid on an after-hours bar. But informants told the FBI it had been planned, the files showed.

One informant told the FBI that only a few smashed windows resulted from the arrests at the bar until the leaders early the next day decided to use the incident as an occasion for their long-planned riot.

THIS ACCOUNT conflicts with news reports that the arrests were immediately followed by a wild scene of window smashing and looting that involved thousands of people in the heart of the city's Near West Side ghetto.

The FBI files contained no evaluation of the reliability of the informants.

A group of "10 to 20 guys" rented 10 apartments in Detroit on a monthly basis and stocked each with drums of gasoline, bottles and rags, according to a report informants gave afterwards to FBI investigators.

Rioters also were given an address where rifles and pistols were stored, ready to be passed out to them after the violence got under way, the report said.

A SUSPECTED LEADER, whose name was deleted, was said to be a law school graduate then taking a bar examination, and also a friend of Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown, the file report said.

A memo said of one informant: "The plan, as he believes it to be, was that the group was geared toward the summer. He said he had been told by one person that the group instigated the blind pig incident."

"Blind pig" is a local term for an after-hours drinking or gambling spot.

"The police were the target," the report on the informant said. "This organization was aware of and understood the strong feelings of the ghetto people against the police and were using this to set the whole thing up."

"They were ready to pick the right incident and go with it," the informant was quoted as saying.